



ISKCON Communications

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Founder-*Acharya* His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Official Statement on the Passing of His Holiness Pope Francis

April 21, 2025

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) extends its deepest condolences to the members of the Roman Catholic Church and all those mourning the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis, who departed from this world on April 21, 2025.

Pope Francis was a visionary leader who dedicated his life not only to strengthening the Catholic Church but also to fostering unity among people of all faiths. He made historic strides in interfaith dialogue, strengthening bonds between many different religious communities and promoting mutual respect and understanding.

His engagement with the Muslim world was groundbreaking. In 2019, he made history by signing the Document on Human Fraternity alongside the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb, in Abu Dhabi—an unprecedented call for interfaith coexistence and peace.

Pope Francis also valued dialogue with Hindu leaders, including Vaishnavas, as demonstrated during a 2023 interfaith gathering in Lisbon, Portugal. He welcomed Hindu delegations to the Vatican and hosted other meetings, fostering discussions on shared principles such as compassion, environmental stewardship, and nonviolence.

Pope Francis also nurtured strong relationships with Jewish leaders, a bond rooted in his early years in Argentina. As pope, he visited Holocaust memorials, unequivocally condemned anti-Semitism, and reaffirmed the shared spiritual heritage of Christianity and Judaism. His close friendship with Rabbi Abraham Skorka symbolized his dedication to interfaith dialogue based on mutual respect.

His efforts to heal divisions within Christianity were evident in his outreach to Protestant communities. In 2016, he commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in Sweden, standing alongside Lutheran leaders in a powerful gesture of reconciliation.

His voice on secular matters, including his environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'*, championed global ethical concerns that resonate deeply with many traditions, including Vaishnava Hindus. Pope Francis' leadership was defined by his unwavering belief that faith should serve as a force for unity rather than division.

His interfaith efforts were not merely diplomatic gestures but a sincere embodiment of his vision for a world where religious diversity enriches rather than separates humanity. Pope Francis' passing marks the end of an era, but his legacy—one of love, humility, and bridge-building—will continue to inspire generations to come.